

Home Care Instructions Following Tooth Extraction

Immediately Following Tooth Extraction Procedure

1. Bite on a piece of sterile gauze with firm pressure to stop bleeding for **45 minutes** immediately following tooth removal or oral surgery. After 45 minutes you may change the gauze as needed. Bleeding will subside after a few hours. For prolonged bleeding you may try to soak a tea bag and bite down firmly. The proteins in the tea will help promote blood clotting or a scab to form and allow healing to begin.
2. Do not smoke or use alcohol or any alcohol containing products in the first **3 days**.
3. Take recommended or prescribed pain medication by your dentist before the numbness wears off to help with post-op discomfort or tenderness. Take pain medication as needed. Avoid taking medication on an empty stomach. For mild pain relief or post-op discomfort, you can use over-the-counter Ibuprofen 200mg (such as Advil). **Always discuss with your dentist first what pain medication to take.**
4. Do **not** sip through a straw. **No** vigorous rinsing or spitting that might dislodge the blood clot.
5. Eat soft foods and avoid chewing in the area of the tooth extraction. No hot or spicy foods. No crunchy foods.
6. Swelling will be worst within the first 72 hours or 3 days following tooth extraction. Cold compression or place an ice pack in the area for 15-20 minutes on and 15-20 minutes off to reduce post-op swelling.
7. Stay hydrated! Make sure you are getting plenty of fluids and water. If you are sore or experiencing slight muscle stiffness, then you can always try to place and melt small ice cubes or ice chips in your mouth.
8. Get plenty of rest. Avoid strenuous physical activity or exercise.

Same Day or Evening Following Tooth Extraction Procedure

Continue to follow above instructions and also:

9. Brush your teeth as you would normally, but be **very gentle** in the area of the extraction site. Do not rinse or spit vigorously. Rinse gently or allow your saliva to drool.

10. Do not use any alcohol or alcohol containing products. This includes mouth rinses that might contain a small amount of alcohol.

11. Elevate your head or stack a few pillows when you sleep to keep pressure off of the extraction site and to help with swelling.

One-Day (24 hours) Following Tooth Extraction Procedure

Continue to follow above instructions for the next 3-4 days and also:

12. Begin lukewarm salt-water mouth rinse (or 1 teaspoon salt and 1 cup warm water) 3 times a day and continue for 3-4 days. This will help keep the extraction site clean if you get food or debris trapped in it. If you have a history of high blood pressure, always check with your dentist first.

Special Considerations

13. **Nausea and Vomiting:** You may experience slight nausea/vomiting immediately after the procedure from swallowing blood. If you do, then wait at least 1 hour before taking anything by mouth. This includes medication. You should then try to sip on water or juice every 10-15 minutes.

14. **Sutures:** If sutures or stitches were placed after tooth removal, then expect to follow up 7-10 days after the procedure to get the sutures removed.

15. **Dry Socket:** If you are experiencing worsened pain 3-5 days following the procedure, then you might be experiencing a dry socket. Dry socket occurs in the event when there is incomplete healing or proper formation of a blood clot. The cause is unknown. It may be characterized by throbbing pain that can radiate to the ear, jaw, chin and to other teeth. Other symptoms might include bad taste or foul odor in the mouth. Call your dentist if you believe you might be experiencing a dry socket so that it can be properly cleaned and treated to allow for proper healing to take place.

16. **Antibiotics:** If you are prescribed antibiotics, then take as directed and complete the regimen as prescribed by the dentist. Stop taking the antibiotic if you develop an allergic reaction (such as itchiness, rash, swelling in the throat).